KNOWLEDGE AND BEHAVIOR OF KHON KAEN UNIVERSITY STUDENT FOR EAR PICKING

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ABSTRACT

Background: The Out Patient Department (OPD) of Otolaryngology of Srinagarind Hospital found that most of the patients had the incorrect knowledge and behavior on ear picking which can cause ENT diseases from mild (acute otitis externa, impact cerumen) to severe (tympanic membrane perforation) and possibly lead to hearing loss. 1/3 of OPD cases of Otolaryngology of Srinagarind Hospital in 2003 with acute otitis externa and impact cerumen were students. Therefore we wanted to know the knowledge and behavior on ear picking among Khon Kaen University students. We expect that the results of our study may be useful for education and promotion of correct behavior about ear picking that may decrease the incidence of ENT diseases.

Objective: to find out 1. Khon Kaen University students knowledge of ears picking
2. Khon Kaen University students ear picking behavior.

Design: Descriptive study

Setting: Khon Kaen University (KKU), Amphur Mueng, Khon Kaen, Thailand

Population sampling: Bachelor degree students in Khon Kaen University who have picked their ears.

Population sampling: 250 sample sized by accidental sampling

Data collection: Self-admistered questionnaire

Data analysis: Descriptive static (frequency, ratio, mean, median, mode) and analytic static (T-test and correlation)

Result: 250 samples (male 36.8% and female 62.8%) age range 16-26 and from the 16 faculties of KKU. We studied knowledge in two parts; part I “ears and ear wax” and part II “picking ears and possible complications”. 86.4% showed an adequately knowledge in the survey (with a pass rate determined by an ENT specialist) in part I, 69.2% passed the survey adequately in part II and 63.6% passed the survey adequately in both parts. All subjects had picked their ears in the previous month when we consider the mean of frequency of picking ear behavior found that the frequency is 8.66 times. Subjects picked ears to clean the ear canal (5.32 times) and decrease irritation in the
ear canal (2.35 times). Picking devices used were cotton buds (7.26 times) and finger tips and nails (1.10 times). Most picked their own ears (8.33 times). The statistics showed a correlation between knowledge in Part I or Part I and II and a reduction in ear picking, however an increase in knowledge in Part I alone showed no significant effect on ear picking.

**Conclusion:** Most of samples have adequate knowledge on ear picking but, still thinking that it is necessary, continue to practice it. Health education should explain the mechanism by which ear wax removes itself, possible complications and correct methods for cleaning ears without ear picking. This could correct peoples belief about the necessity of ear picking and decrease this behavior.